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16 volatile memory
 18 non-volatile memory
 20 display
 22 communication device (DTMF generator & detector)
 24 infrared remote sensor
 26 keyboard
 28 public switched telephone network (PSTN)

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for playback of recordings and communication with a remote database to obtain information about the recordings, comprising:

a recorded signal output device to reproduce a recorded signal from a recording;

a display to display at least textual data;

a memory to store a textual recording name of the recording for output to said display in response to output of the recorded signal by said recorded signal output device;

a communication device to generate and detect dual-tone multifrequency signals to communicate with the remote database; and

a controller, coupled to said recorded signal output device, said display, said memory and said communication device, to control said apparatus to establish communication with the remote database, query the remote database based on information in the recorded signal reproduced from the recording and supply the textual recording name of the recording from the remote database to said memory.

2. An apparatus for playback of recordings and communication with a remote database to obtain information about the recordings, comprising:

an enclosure;

a recorded signal output device, disposed in said enclosure, to reproduce a recorded signal from a recording;

a controller, disposed in said enclosure and coupled to said recorded signal output device, to control said apparatus;

a display, mounted at a first surface of said enclosure and coupled to said controller, to display at least textual data;

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a memory, disposed in said enclosure and coupled to said controller, to store a textual recording name of the recording for output to said display in response to output of the recorded signal by said recorded signal output device; and

a communication device, disposed in said enclosure and coupled to said controller, to obtain the textual recording name by establishing communication with the remote database without using a modem or an ISDN terminal adapter, querying the remote database based on information in the recorded signal reproduced from the recording and supplying the textual recording name of the recording from the remote database to said memory.

3. An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said communication device generates and detects dual-tone multifrequency signals to communicate with the remote database.

4. An apparatus as recited in claim 2, further comprising an interface, coupled to said communication device and mounted at a second surface of said enclosure, for external communication using a standard set by one of the Electronic Industry Association and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

5. An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the remote database is connected to a public computer network and said apparatus is connected to a local network coupled to the public computer network,

wherein said apparatus further comprises a network interface, coupled to said communication device and mounted at a second surface of said enclosure, for external communication with the local network, and wherein at least one of said controller and said communication device provide a TCP/IP stack for communication with the remote database via said network interface and the local and public computer networks.

6. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the recording is stored on a storage medium in said apparatus during playback of the recording.

7. An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein the recording is stored on a storage medium in said apparatus during playback of the recording.

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